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IUSTITIA ET PAX

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E A S T T I M O R

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(This is the full report of what I have reported in the informal meeting on Thursday 7 November and in the general meeting on Friday 8 November 1985 of the General Assembly of the Pontifical Commission Iustitia et Pax.)

1. Geography and Population

- Traditionally called Portugese Timor - also Timor-Dili (after the capital DILI). Now East Timor, because it is the eastern part of the Timor island.
- Population 555.350 (census 1980), of which 445.000 Catholics. (There are figures of ± 640.000 based not on census but on reports from the various LIURAIS / districts.)

2. History

At the beginning of the 16th century the Portugese came to Malacca and from there to the Moluccas and eastern part of Indonesia. In 1534 they started with Catholicism in Ternate. In 1543 St. Francis Xavier stayed 3 years in Hilo / Amboina. In 1633 Catholic religion started in East Timor and the region in the neighbourhood, a.o. in Flores.

At the beginning of the 19th century Portugese influence was pushed back by the Dutch to a few islands around Timor. In 1859, after the Dutch invaded Kupang / Timor, an agreement was reached among the Dutch and the Portugese. Portugal was assigned the eastern part of Timor and must hand over Flores, Sabu and Western Timor to the Dutch.

So Portugese influence was settled in East Timor only after

1859 and until then there were regular communications and relations with Western Timor, Flores and the islands around it. After 1859 there have been intensive communications between East and West Timor because they are of the same descendants ("suker") and are speaking the same language, the TETUM, and have the same customs and tradition.

3. Political and Military Developments

a) In 1974, after the "Flower" (April) Revolution in Portugal, the new Government proclaimed the DECOLONIZATION POLICY in East Timor. In July 1974, as Ambassador of Indonesia in Brussels (to the EEC, Belgium and Luxembourg), I contacted informally friends at the Foreign Office in Lisbon to start a discussion about the Decolonization policy and renewal of Diplomatic relations between Indonesia and Portugal. I proposed to President Soeharto to send a delegation to Portugal which took place in October 1974. The Presidential Delegation to Lisbon consisted of Gen. Ali Moertopo, personal assistant to President Soeharto, the Indonesian Ambassador to Paris and myself. We met and had discussions with the President of the State, Francisco Da Costa Gomez, Premier Vasco Gonsalves, Foreign Minister Mario Soares, and Minister for Interterritorial Coordination, Dr. Antonio de Almeida Santos. They informed us about the 3 options of decolonization:

1. staying with Portugal in a kind of a federation / commonwealth relation;
2. to be independent;
3. to join Indonesia.

About East Timor they were of the opinion that <u>option 1</u> (one) was <u>not desirable</u>, because Portugal could be accused of being not serious with decolonization. <u>Option 2</u> (two), to be independent, for East Timor, according to them, was <u>not realistic</u>. The <u>only realistic and relevant option</u> was joining Indonesia, <u>option 3</u> (three), but <u>by free choice of the people</u>. They agreed that Portugal will be in close cooperation with Indonesia in this decolonization process of East Timor and also agreed that Indonesia made propaganda for joining Indonesia through the

to be reopened Indonesian Consulate General in Dili. Not long after the meeting the diplomatic relations were renewed. Both countries had full-fledged Ambassadors in their respective capitals plus Indonesia a Consulate General in Dili.

b) In the meantime, in Timor itself political parties were established. The ASDT - later FRETELIN (Frente Revolucionaria de Timor Leste Independente), the UDT (Uniao Democratica Timorese), the APODETI (Associacao Popular Democratica de Timor), and two small parties, the KOTA Party and the TRABALHISTA (Labour) Party.

The three first parties had their programmes and political actions in line with the three options,
the UDT - the first option (within the Portugese commonwealth);
the FRETELIN - the second option (independence);
the APODETI - the third option (joining Indonesia).

b.1) At the beginning of 1975, the political conflict and confusion started between the three political parties; around August 1975 the conflicts and confusion developed into coup and counter-coup actions among the three political parties, with shootings and killings. The situation became more complicated when the Portugese Governor left Dili to settle himself and the Government in ATAURO, an island opposite Dili.

b.2) The coups and counter-coups became an open civil war among the groups, with many killings, and many people flew across the Indonesian border.
A team of the Australian Council for Overseas Aid (a supporter of FRETELIN) estimated that around 3000 people had lost their lives in this civil war up to October 1975. According to the representative of the International Commission for the Red Cross there were ten of thousands East Timorese refugees who crossed the border of Indonesia.

c) Facing these developments Indonesia and Portugal Foreign Ministers met in Rome on November 1st, 1975, which produced the famous Rome agreement (orderly decolonization

process, Portugal responsible to end the civil war and recognized the legitimate interest of Indonesia in an orderly situation and decolonization process in East Timor).

d) On November 28, 1975, FRETELIN unilaterally issued the Declaration of Independence of East Timor.

On November 30, as a reaction, all the other four parties issued the Proclamation of Independence of East Timor from Portugal and a simultanous integration of the territory with Indonesia. For their security, they called upon Indonesia's economic and military aid.

e) This is the beginning of Indonesian military involvement. Within ten days, on December 17, 1975, Dili was freed from FRETELIN and with it the "bloody" civil war came to an end. A provisional Government by APODETI and UDT was established.

4. Free choice / the act of self-determination

4.1 The Provisional Government in Dili was of the opinion that the process of decolonization should be continued with the active role of the U.N. They copied the Portugese system of decolonization by voting in a Peoples Assembly consisting of elected representatives of the 13 districts plus representatives of all walks of life. After waiting for months for the U.N. response for the system of free choice / act of self-determination and their presence, the act of free choice was executed on May 31st, 1976. The result was integration with Indonesia by unanimous vote.

4.2 On June 7, 1976, a delegation of the Peoples Assembly presented a formal request to the Indonesian Government.

On July 15, the Indonesian Parliament approved the Bill of Integration. On July 17, 1976, the President signed the Bill to become Law.

4.3 The integration has been recognized by 80 foreign governments.

5. U.N. position

According to the Security Council Resolution (nr. 384) 1975, Mr. Guicciardi appointed by the Secretary General visited East Timor received by the Provisional Government. Facilitated by the Provisional Government he met with leaders of FRETELIN. A planned visit to territories of FRETELIN failed because FRETELIN failed to show the territories. Mr. Guicciardi visited Indonesia and Australia. This is the only visit made by the U.N. representative. During the last three consequent years the U.N. even failed to put East Timor on their agenda.

6. Military developments

After the integration Indonesia increased military actions for law and order and the FRETELIN guerilla was pushed into the mountains and got more and more isolated.
It is not the intention to make an all out assault to them, to save lines and to prevent peoples' suffering.
An approach of persuasion and amnesty and pardon is used to get the remnants of FRETELIN to stop their guerilla warfare.
This Government approach towards the guerillas makes it that the guerillas are still around after 10 years. People get the impression as if there is popular support for the guerillas. In fact, it is because of the leniency of the Government.

7. Excessive, unproper, negative international press-coverage

7.1 Nobody can (and shall) deny that there were killings, political imprisonments, even tortures committed by individuals. There were sufferings. Because there was war. In a war there are two parties involved. In the international, especially Catholic coverages, only Indonesia is accused.

7.2 All the widely covered news and photographs are unchecked and many times without naming the sources.

(This is against all ethics!) The news are all the same, from some time ago, but published separately in several magazins and reprinted again and again, to give to uninformed and uncritical readers the impression as if it has just happened. Included news and photographs from the time of internal strife - last quarter of 1975 - killings by FRETELIN. Now they are published as if they happened during Indonesian military actions. (In this connection, the photographs published in Missioni Consolata, anno 87°, 5/1975, besides unesthetic and "raw", were also questionable about the time and place where those photographs have been made!)

7.3 During my last visit to Dili (19/20 October 1985), people who are critical towards the Indonesian Government told me that FRETELIN's concept and idea never lived in the minds and hearts of the population. FRETELIN lives only by virtue of the mistakes made by the Indonesian Government. This implies that the intensive coverage of Indonesian mistakes (killings, etc.) or what is called an "assault against human rights and genocide" is to keep FRETELIN alive in the international mind, by lack of domestic support. It is biased and serves a political end. It is a pity that Catholic organizations and magazins - all people of good will - can be so easily manipulated.

7.4 The biased coverage does not serve the East Timorese people and their rights at all. The only result is an increasing irritation in the relationship between Indonesian Government and Catholics.
It is not the way to get betterment of people's conviction in East Timor. A constant internal dialogue and active reports to the responsible Government officials at all levels, as is done by the Indonesian Catholic Church, by the local Government, by other leaders and also by the Nuncio in Jakarta, all these efforts from within Indonesia and in an Indonesian way are more effective. By saying this, it does not mean that we have to be quiet when injustice reigns and people's human rights are assaulted. By saying this,

it means that the fight should be done prudently, with wisdom and effectively, because officials and the system in Indonesia are reasonable, open and responsible.

8. Latest developments

8.1 During my latest visit to Dili on 19/20 October this year, I met Father Ricardo representing Mr. Belo, who was on duty in the inland, and the Governor of East Timor Fr. Mario VIEGAS CARRASCALAO.

8.2 Both leaders told me that during the last 2 years the situation has improved tremendously. Political prisoners in Atauro (from the time of intensification of anti-guerilla warfare 1982/83) have been released. There is relative social stability and economic development intensified. Father Ricardo hoped that the situation could be maintained and that there will be not too frequent change of military leaders in Dili.

8.3 The Governor's "open house" for everybody and about everything even for personal, private problems on every Friday, the whole day, has socially and psychologically a stabilizing effect. And if the reported problems are in relation with or about military conduct, the Governor immediately contacts the military leaders concerned.

8.4 I have visited East Timor since 1961/1971 during the Portugese regime and in 1976, 1980 and this October. Compared with Flores - the island where I come from - East Timor in 1976 was around 50 years behind. But it is catching up fairly because of the intensive development efforts by the local and central Government.

8.5 According to Father Ricardo and the Governor, there is a remarkable, increased demand for education especially in the villages. This creates problems of availability of school buildings, material and teachers. Recruitements in and outside of East Timor are needed.

9. Fears that arise

9.1 Destruction of East Timorese history, culture and religion. It has no ground at all! It is not according to experiences in other parts of Indonesia, where local people are free and active to develop their own culture, history and religion. It is seen as an enrichment of the National identity. Also the fear to be discriminated and wiped out as a minority group has no ground at all! Living example is my own experience. Coming from a small island, Flores, and being a Catholic, I am "double minority"; yet I have reached all highest positions in Government and political life of the Nation.

9.2 Fear of losing the own language. The local language, the Tetum, like other local languages, is fully respected (Indonesia has ± 320 languages!). Tetum is freely used in the Holy Masses and religious instructions (I have attended the Holy Mass in Tetum on Sunday October 20, in the parish of Father Ricardo. From all the Masses on each Sunday only one Mass is in Indonesian. All the remaining Masses celebrated are in Tetum!).
The Indonesian language is meant as lingua franca.

9.3 Fear of Islamization. It is the fear of an isolated paternalistic society which goes open and has still to find its own position in a plural society rather than real danger from the Islam. Other Catholic regions as Flores can live with it. It is better to increase the quality of religious life and awareness of the people than to live in fear... As experienced in other regions, Catholic culture can be developed even better in a plural society.

9.4 Much is heard that FRETELIN's existence as guerilla during these10 years is a proof of its popularity with the people. As is said in point 6 and point 7.3, FRETELIN guerilla's existence so far is by leniency of the Government and by virtue of the mistakes made by the Government. Not by their own virtue or by virtue of their cause and people's support!

9.5 Much is proposed to open the region for international visits and coverage. I agree with this proposal. But the Government's position is also real, because of past experiences with journalists and newsmen and because of the simplicity (and many still illiterate - due to the colonial system in the past) of the people. A selective and more wider opening is however done during the last two years. In the meantime, the International Red Cross, the Catholic Relief Services, UNIDO have been working normally during these years of integration.

10. <u>The Position of the Church in East Timor and the Indonesian Catholic Church</u>

10.1 The Church and the leadership of the Church <u>in East Timor</u> are facing tremendous problems and challenges of creative adjustments to new political and social realities and dynamics. The transition from a powerfull dominant position in society and towards government, the new young leadership, lack of manpower, more social mobility and openness and problems of human sufferings during the war and military actions. All these come down as a heavy burden on her. That is why it is not wise to take an isolationist or a distrust attitude towards social, political realities and developments or to be in the "contramine". Unbalanced, excessive and unchecked negative coverages are not in the interest of the local Church. The widespread quotation of Msgr. Belos' letter, which was meant as a personal letter expressing the concern of a pastor, seems to be a deliberate manipulation for certain political purposes rather than for the purpose of <u>genuine</u> pursuit of justice and peace in East Timor. It harms more the credibility

of the leadership of the bishop than the prestige of the Indonesian Government. Once more -- prudentia!

10.2 The Indonesian Church is very much engaged in the developments of the Church of East Timor, although the Church in East Timor does not belong to the National Bishops' Conference of Indonesia. This formal position and separation creates sometimes psychological problems and decreases effectiveness of tackling problems which the Church in East Timor is facing vis-à-vis Government officials.

Nevertheless, the factual contacts and cooperation between the two Churches are increasing and more and more integrated in recruiting manpower, education in seminaries and general education, health and social developments. (At the Catholic University ATMAJAYA in Jakarta, under my chairmanship are 25 students from East Timor at various faculties. Ten students with financial assistance from East Timor Governments, one from the President of Indonesia, one from the Chief Commander of the Army and thirteen from the Atmajaya University including full lodging!)

A few years ago the National Bishops' Conference in Jakarta had issued a solidarity statement with East Timor. It was meant to show to the people in East Timor that the Indonesian Bishops' Conference is with them in their conditions and developments and that the involvement of the National Bishops' Conference is to show this solidarity. It is to show them that although we are formally still separated, we are so near and are brothers in our goals, ideals and developments. This statement was in the international world - by certain Catholic press and magazines - (miss- and only) interpreted (and "hinein"-interpreted) as a proof of agreement with the "assault against human rights and genocide" in East Timor.

11. The Relation between the Church (Vatican) and Indonesia

- The relation between the Vatican and Indonesia is - thank God - good, full cooperation and full understanding.

- The position of the Vatican in the "East Timor question" is respected and understood, although an adjustment to the real condition is much expected.

- But the excessive, onesided, negative coverage in international Catholic press and magazines is very much regretted and creates irritation in some official circles in Indonesia.

- There is much hope and expectation for a visit of the Holy Father to Indonesia. It was expected in 1984 and there has been some disappointment among Catholics and Government circles that it had not taken place while PNG, Indonesia's Eastern neighbour, was visited. I am not making judgments, because there was never an official indication at all from the Vatican side for a visit to Indonesia, but I am only conveying feelings among some sectors in the Church and in Government circles.

- There are rumours that next year (1986) the Holy Father is planning to visit India and Australia. There will be flying again vice-versa over Indonesia. The hope is that this time the Holy Father's visit to Indonesia will be part of the visit to that part of the world. In 1970 Pope Paul VI had visited Indonesia after the Philippines and Australia. The visit of Pope Paul VI to Indonesia is still remembered with respect and enthusiasm by the Catholics and the Nation.